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A

SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons.

A T

St. Margarets Weſtminſter,

On *Wedneſday* the 5*th* of *April*, 1699.

Being a ſolemn day of Faſting for *Imploring a Bleſſing on his Majeſty, and all his Dominions, and for averting thoſe Judgments we moſt juſtly deſerve, and for the diſtreſſed Proteſtants abroad.*

By *James Smalwood*, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of *Romney*, and His Majeſties own Regiment of Foot-Guards.

LONDON,
Printed for *Abel Roper*, and *R. Baſet*, in *Fleet-ſtreet*. 1699.

Mr. *SMALWOOD's*

FAST-SERMON

Before the

House of COMMONS,

April 5. 1699.

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A

FAST-SERMON

BEFORE THE

House of Commons.

PSAL. 80. laſt ver.

Turn us again, O Lord God of Hoſts, ſhew us the light of thy countenance and we ſhall be whole.

IF we read over this whole Pſalm, we may plainly diſcover by it, that the people of *Iſrael* were, when it was compoſed, under ſome great and heavy affliction, *Thou feedeſt us with the bread of tears, ond thou giveſt us plenteouſneſs of tears to drink; Thou haſt made us a very ſtrife unto*

 our

our neighbours, and our enemies laugh us to ſcorn, ſays the Pſalmiſt, v. 5. and 6. whereupon according to his uſual cuſtom he addreſſes himſelf to Almighty God for Relief and Succour, *Hear O thou ſhepheard of Iſrael,* ſays he, v. 1. *ſtir up thy ſtrength and come help and us,* verſe 2. *How long wilt thou be angry with thy people that pray,* verſ. 4. and to mention no more of his pathetical Supplications, no leſs than three times in this ſhort Pſalm, which adds extremely not only to the fervency, but alſo to the Beauty and Harmony of his Prayer, he repeats the words I have choſe for my Text, *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hoſts, ſhew us the light of thy countenance, and we ſhall be whole,* or as the old Tranſlation renders it nearer the Hebrew, *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hoſts, cauſe thy face to ſhine upon us, and we ſhall be ſaved.*

Now though the people of *Iſrael*'s caſe at that time, and ours at preſent is not altogether the ſame, tho (bleſſed be God) we of this Nation do not now labour under any publick affliction, neither have our Enemies any great reaſon to *laugh us to ſcorn*; yet to ſhew that this Pſalm is very ſuitable to the occaſion of our preſent meeting, we may obſerve the Holy Prophet prays particularly for *three* things in it, wherein we may reaſonably ſuppoſe he judged the welfare of the people to conſiſt, and which three things we are by publick Authority enjoyned this day to pray to God for.

1. He prays for a Bleſſing upon the King, *let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, and upon the Son of Man, whom thou haſt made ſo ſtrong for thine own ſelf.* v. 17.

2*dly*. He

2*dly*. He prays for the afflicted condition of the Church, That *God in his great mercy and goodneſs would relieve and comfort* that, and this he couches very elegantly under the Metapher of a vine, *Thou haſt brought a vine out of Ægypt, thou haſt caſt out the heathen and planted it, thou madeſt room for it, and when it had taken root it filled the land, why haſt thou then broken down her hedge, that all thoſe that go by pluck off her grapes, the wild boar out of the wood does root it up, and the wild beaſts of the field devour it*. verſ. 12. 13.

3*dly*. He prays to God to remove and *avert thoſe judgements which the manifold ſins and provocations of the people had juſtly deſerved*, and that is implyed in the words of my Text.

Theſe *three* things the Holy Prophet particularizes in this Pſalm, exactly agreeable to the duty required of us this day: But what he chiefly ſues for, and lays the ſtreſs of his Prayers on, as a means of procuring the other two, and indeed all Bleſſings whatever, is a general converſion and repentance of the people; this is his chiefeſt aim, this we find the main ſcope and burden of this his heavenly Song, therefore it is he repeats theſe words ſo often, and heigthens them ſtill with greater vehemency and ardour every time than other; *Turn us again O God*, verſ. 3. *Turn us again O Lord God*, verſ. 7. *Turn us again O Lord God of hoſts, ſhew us the light of thy countenance and we ſhall be whole*. verſ. 19.

The words are of themſelves very plain and intelligible, not to ſpend therefore any time in the explanation of them. From the conſideration of the circumſtances which King *David* and his people were

now in, which was under the Judgments of God, and the methods that he took to remove those judgments, which was a general conversion of the people from sin, I draw these two doctrinal conclusions.

1. In respect to God, that the chief end and design God aims at in sending judgments upon a People or Nation, is to reclaim them from their sins.

2. In respect to Men, that the only way a People or Nation has to avert God's judgments, is to turn from their sins.

I shall speak to these two Points, and then apply them to the business of the day.

1. The chief end and design God aims at in sending Judgments on a People is to reclaim them from their sins. It may here be said, that the end of all the dispensations of God to mankind is to convert them from sin: For this very purpose did he send his Son into the World, to draw and win us to himself, by the promises of Heaven and Eternal Happiness, and all the attractive motives that can be suppos'd to work upon Humane understanding, and for this only reason does God daily bestow his mercies and benefits upon us; according to what St. *Paul* tells us, *The goodness of God leadeth us to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 4. Why then if the gentler methods of lenity and mercy may have the same effect, does God use the severer ways of reclaiming men by pouring Judgments and Afflictions upon them?

To

To this I anſwer, The ways which God chiefly delights to deal with mankind in, are gentleneſs, *Goodneſs, Forbearance and Long-ſuffering, God does not afflict willingly nor grieve the Children of Men,* ſays the Prophet *Jeremiah*, nay, the whole tenour of Scripture diſcovers this to be the nature of God; and were it not that we are ſuch perverſe Creatures as not to be wrought upon by kindneſs, ſo wild as not to be tamed by gentle uſage, God would not handle us in any other way, *I drew them with the cords of a Man, with the bands of Love*, ſays the Holy ſpirit in the Prophet *Hoſea*, but the *Jews* but ſtill ſo ſtiff-necked and untractable they would not follow, ſo that they almoſt forced God, contrary to his inclination, to take the rod into his hand, and when they would not lead then to drive them, God was forc'd to turn thoſe ſoft cords into whips, and thoſe bands of Love into ſhackels of Iron. Rom. 2. 4. Lam. 3. 33. v. 11. 4.

And yet when God comes to take this courſe with Man, he ſtill, like a prudent Parent, aims at nothing but his good and benefit by it, if he puts a yoke upon our necks, it is but to breing us to humity, if he puts the bitt into our mouths, it is but to check our career in ſin, if he afflicts us, it is not becauſe it is pleaſant to him to deal harſhly with us, but becauſe it is profitable and neceſſary for us ſo to be dealt with.

This the holy Scripture informs us to be the end of all the ſevere methods of Providence towards the Sons of Men, this, *Moſes* tells us, made God exerciſe the people of *Iſrael* with all the hardſhips could be inflicted on them for forty years in the Wilderneſs, *He led thee through that great and terrible Wilderneſs wherein*

wherein were fiery Serpents, and Scorpions, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at the latter end, Deut. 8. 15. So that the afflicting Providences of God are not only apt in their own nature to do us good: but, which is a great argument of his goodneſs, God intends and aims at this end alone by them. Indeed we often read in Scripture of God's *Anger* and *Wrath*, and *heavy diſpleaſure*, and *Fury* and *Indignation*, but it is always againſt Mens ſins and not their perſons; and if his reſentments are ſo great as to provoke him to inflict any Judgment, yet ſtill it is with a merciful deſign in the end. If he has viſited a Nation with any Plague, or ſore Diſeaſe, it was only to let out its corruption, if he has thrown us into the *Furnace of affliction, and tryed us ſo as by Fire*, it was that he might refine and purifie us from the droſs of our Sins; If he has embaraſs'd us in War and Battle, it was only to let out ſo much hot blood, that the whole body might be the more cool and temperate, and healthful afterwards; ſo that, tho' it cannot be denied but that the Judgments of God are evil in themſelves, yet conſidering the intention of them, they are no real objections againſt the mercy and goodneſs of God, but rather Arguments for it.

My firſt Doctrinal concluſion appearing thus evident, namely, That the chief end and deſign which God aims at by ſending his Judgments upon a People, is to turn them from their Sins, that ſo they may be ſaved; what follows but that we make the right uſe of this Doctrine. If Judgments which are in themſelves very irkſome and grievous to humane nature, muſt be the remedies of ſin, why will we not live regularly

larly and prevent them? What corrupt humours are to the body, that sin is to the soul, its greatest Disease and Malignity; now if we will contract ill humours and distempers, if we will make our selves sick, that is our own mismanagement and folly, and no fault of the Physitian, but if when we are sick the Physitian does recover us, tho' it be by the most unpleasant and bittrest draughts, we are most certainly beholden to him; all Temporal and Worldly Judgments are properly medicinal, and if we will but suffer them to have their kindly operation upon us, they will work our cure, and how grievous and distastful soever they may seem for the present, they will prove mercies and blessings in the end, for this reason Holy *David* reckons afflictions amongst the blessings of his Life, *It is good for me*, says he, *that I have been afflicted*: And he gives the reason for it in the same *Psalm*, *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have learnt thy precepts*; But however, altho' *David* did make the right use of his afflictions, altho' he applied what God administred aright, and it wrought its intended cure upon him, yet still that Man must be allowed to have lived most cautiously who the least wants such sharp Physick; He certainly must be judged to take a greater care of his health, who by a Temperate diet and Regular way of living prevents sickness, than he that suffers a malady to grow upon him, and to corrupt the whole mass of his blood, so that nothing at last but the most violent courses, and the most painful applications can restore him to his former health. And this brings me to my other doctrinal conclusion from the Text, which this. Psal. 119. 72.

2*dly*. That

2*dly*. That the only way a Nation or a People has to avert God's Judgments, is to forſake their ſins.

The Chriſtian Religion as it preſcribes the beſt and moſt reaſonable precepts of any Religion that ever was in the World for the peace and happineſs of every private Man; ſo likewiſe does it afford the moſt expedient rules for the ſafety and preſervation of Publick Communities; converſion from Sin, and Repentance, Mortification of our Luſts and Appetites, by Watchings, Faſtings, and Prayers, and the humiliation of our Bodies, in order to raiſe in our Souls good and devout thoughts, are duties required from all of us by our Holy Religion, and tho theſe duties may be ſaid to tend moſt directly to the reformation and amendment of ſingle perſons, yet becauſe the whole conſiſts of its parts, the compounded Body of a Nation muſt find a benefit from the good which accrews to the ſeveral members of it; and therefore it is King *Soloman* ſays that *righteouſneſs exalteth a nation*. The practice of Vertue and Piety begets a Reverence and Honour, a Reputation, and a worldly Glory to any people; but on the contrary, be a Country never ſo exalted by Dominion and Power, and Wealth, and all other temporal advantages, and wanting at the ſame time in the moral accompliſhments of Vertue and Juſtice and Piety, that Country will by degrees grow baſe and contemptible, and in the end be ruined, for the ſame Wiſe man tells us, *ſin is the reproach of any people*, and this will appear to be true from two cauſes.

Firſt, From the nature of the thing it ſelf.

Secondly, From the Judgments of God.

1. From

1. From the nature of the thing it self: Whatever Nation degenerates in its Manners, must decay gradually in its Power and Strength, and consequently, is in a ready way to Ruin. Sin, of what kind soever, is against the Interest of a People: Lewdness and Intemperance, and such like Vices, debase Men's Courage and Spirit; they breed Infirmities and Diseases, which spoil the Strain of a Nation, and then it becomes languid, feeble and cowardly, and at last must be the Scorn, as well as the Triumph, of its Enemies. Irreligion, Profaneness and Atheism quite unhinge a Government; for where there is no Belief of a God, there are no Hopes or Fears of future Rewards or Punishments: And when you are once come to that, what can hinder all manner of Wickedness from breaking in upon you? Falshood and Injustice, Perfidiousness and Treachery, Theft, Rapine and Murther, and all the Black Crew of Villainies, must burst in where the Barrier of Religion is broken down: And whenever such a Flood as this pours in upon a Nation, what can hinder it from being ruin'd, either by others, or it self?

2. It is not only that the Nature of the State it self will bring Ruin on a wicked People, but God's Judgments will likewise fall upon them. Indeed, as to private Persons, the Case is not the same; for God is sometimes pleas'd to let good Men live miserably, and the Wicked to prosper in this World; but there is a very good Reason for it, because he reserves the Rewarding of the one, and the Punishing of the other, till a more convenient Season of Retribution. But God does not deal after the same manner with Nations, because publick Bodies and Com-

munities of Men, as such, can only be rewarded and punish'd in this World: In the World to come, all Corporations and Societies will be quite dissolv'd; God will not then reward or punish Nations, as Nations; but every Man must give an Account of himself, and accordingly receive his own Personal Sentence: Therefore the general Sins of a Nation cannot escape God's Judgments here upon Earth, unless they be prevented by a National Repentance.

And indeed, all along the History of the *Old Testament*, we find this to be true by the different Providences of God always suited to the Manners of the *Jews*; they were constantly prosperous, or afflicted, according as Vertue or Vice reign'd amongst them. Nor was it towards his own People alone that God used this constant Method; St. *Austin* tells us, That the mighty Success and Greatness of the *Romans* was a Reward given them from Heaven, for their eminent Justice, Temperance, and other Vertues. And tho' we must not peremptorily conclude, that the Administration of God's Justice shall be the same to all Nations that it was to the People of *Israel*, yet thus much may be probably concluded from it, That as God always favour'd that People when they were obedient to him, and sent his Judgments among them when they rebell'd against him; so he will also deal with other Nations; and this Conclusion is drawn from an Everlasting and Unchangeable Cause; and that is, the Justice of the Divine Providence.

This is what Religion and Reason teach us, That the only Way to procure God's Blessings, and avert his Judgments, is, to work a thorow Reformation on our Lives: And it were to be wish'd that all Men were

were so well dispos'd, that Religion by its Authority, and Reason by its Force, might be sufficient to establish this Truth in the Minds of Men; but the Corruptions of Humane Nature will always make a strong Opposition against it; and the Degeneracy of the present Age in particular is so very great, that no Arguments drawn either from the invincible Demonstrations of Religion, or the Light of Reason, seem to be sufficient for it.

'Tis true, at the first Planting of Christianity, we find the great Author of it then complaining of the Insensibility of Men, that *their Hearts were waxed gross, and their Ears were dull of hearing, and their Eyes were closed; lest at any time they should see with their Eyes, or hear with their Ears, or understand with their Hearts, and should be converted, and he should heal them:* And therefore our Saviour then accompany'd his Doctrine with Miracles; and where he could not prevail with Words, there he convinc'd by Actions. But now it has pleased God to withdraw that Power, and has left his Church to be carry'd on and supported by more ordinary and Humane Ways, by the Succession of the Ministerial Function, by the Power of Preaching, and using all such Arguments and Motives to bring Men to their Duty, which the Holy Spirit has reveal'd to us, and design'd for these good Purposes: But this, we find, will not do; Paul *may plant, and* Apollos *may water:* The Ministers of the Gospel may use what Means they can to reclaim Men, but still we see no visible Effects of all their Labours; Men will not hearken to the Voice of these *Charmers, charm they never so wisely.* We are taught therefore, in this Case, to call in the Assistance Matt. 13. 15. Psal. 50. 5.

of the Civil Power, and the Countenance of Authority; we must apply to them who are our Governors, to them who St. *Peter* tells us *are sent by God, for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and for the Praise of those that do well*: Which, indeed, was never more necessary to be done than in this present Age, which is prodigiously sunk into Atheism and Profaneness, and consequently into the foulest Immoralities, and the most Bestial Vices whatever; Vices of such a kind, that, tho', in Obedience to St. *Paul*'s Direction, I shall not *so much as once name them among you*, yet the Remembrance of a late publick Example cannot hinder us from thinking of some of them. 1 Pet. 2. 14

'Tis this Universal and Monstrous Wickedness that has excited *You*, our wise Governors, to provide several Laws that might be thought effectual for the suppressing of it; and, to mention no more, One, I think, if it were carefully put in Execution, would contribute much towards the suppressing of Atheism and Irreligion; and that is, *The Act against the Papists*. That Looseness of Principles, and consequently Libertinism of Living, which may be observ'd now to spread and grow upon us, may be imputed in great part to some Emissaries of *Rome*, who still are (I speak it knowingly) lurking among us: These Men, by what Authority I know not, I am sure not by his from whom they unworthily take their Name, assume to themselves a peculiar Propriety of the Guidance of Men's Consciences; they creep into all Companies, and get possession of as many Families as they can; and then, by their Arts and Insinuations, they beset and undermine the Principles of Men's Religion; and often-times, while they endeavour to bring a Man

Man over to *their* Religion, they craftily ſteal away his own, and leave him without any. Popery, by its own very Tendency and Diſpoſition, muſt gradually lead Men into Atheiſm, Superſtition, and an Idolatrous Worſhip; ſet up many Gods, and then, as it is the Humour of Mankind to ſtart often-times from one Extream to another, rather than they will have ſo many impos'd upon them, they will chuſe to have none. Nay, if you trace Atheiſm to its Fountain-head, you will find it ſprings from the corrupt Manners of the *Romiſh* Court: *Italy* was the place where it chiefly reign'd for ſome time; our Anceſtors here in *England*, if Hiſtory may be credited, knew none of thoſe *Italian* Vices: But in this laſt Age, Atheiſm began to travel over the *Alpes*, and infected *France*; and now at laſt it has croſs'd the Seas, and has invaded our Nation, and (which is much to be lamented) has prevail'd too in it.

I have dwelt a little upon this Article, becauſe I think the only Way for this Nation to flouriſh and be happy, and for the Proteſtant Church to ſtand pure and uncorrupt, is, to remove, if poſſible, all thoſe far from it, whoſe Buſineſs and Study it is, not only to diſtract our Government, but alſo to pollute our Manners.

But I leave this, next to God, to the Great and Wiſe Council of the Nation. I proceed now,

Thirdly. To apply what has been ſaid to the Buſineſs of the Day. And becauſe we have heard, *Firſt*, That the chief Deſign of God's Judgments upon a People, is, to reclaim them from their Sins; and *Secondly*, That the only Way a People had to prevent and avert God's Judgments, was, to forſake their Sins;

Sins; therefore Converſion from Sin, to God, muſt be eſteem'd a neceſſary Spiritual Duty: And tho' this Duty is moſt certainly always very requiſite and ſeaſonable, yet there are ſome Seaſons when the Church does moſt chiefly require it; and, to name no more, this preſent Seaſon is the greateſt; now in the Time of *Lent*, but more eſpecially in this *Magna Hebdomada*, this *Great Week* before the Reſurrection, we are call'd upon to make a ſtrict Re-view of our Lives, and to humble our Souls in God's Preſence, and to bewail our manifold Tranſgreſſions, and to devote our ſelves afreſh to his Service. This Obligation the holy Church lays upon us: But ſtill there is another Engagement for our moſt ſolemn Humiliation on this Day, Publick Authority has added a further Injunction on us: To anſwer therefore this double Obligation, and that we may perform the Office of the Day aright, let us enquire what we have now to do; and that I ſhall conſider of after this Two-fold Manner:

Firſt, *Generally*; What *all* Days of Humiliation do require of us.

Secondly, *Particularly*; What *this* Day diſtinctly requires.

Firſt, All Days of Publick Humiliation ſeem to require theſe Three Things at our Hands:

1. That we ſhould humble our ſelves before God, every one for his own Perſonal Sins, whereby he has provok'd God, and increas'd the publick Guilt, and done his part to bring down the Judgments and Vengeance of God upon the Nation.

2. That we ſhould likewiſe heartily lament the Sins of the Publick, eſpecially the great and crying Sins

Sins of the Nation, whereby the Wrath and Indignation of God has been so justly incens'd against us.

3. We should prosecute this our Humiliation with an Actual Reformation and Amendment of our Lives for the future.

I do but just mention these Particulars, without any Enlargement on them that I may more fully speak to the Duties of the Day, which are these *Three:*

1. We are this Day to pray to God that he would *avert those Judgments which our manifold Sins and Provocations have most justly deserv'd.*

2. That he would, *in his great Mercy and Goodness, relieve and comfort such as suffer abroad for the Protestant Religion.*

3. We are to *implore a Blessing from Almighty God, upon His Majesty, and all His Dominions.*

1. We are to make our Supplications unto God for the *Averting of those Judgments which our manifold Sins and Provocations have justly deserv'd.* 'Tis true, we of this Nation have lately receiv'd no small Tokens of God's favourable Inclinations to us, in bestowing upon us a Grateful and an Honourable Peace; a Peace that, I hope, may prove a competent Recompence to us for all our Toils, and Fatigues, and Expences: But if we continue to lead Lives unsuitable to such Blessings receiv'd, how easily may God find a Way to let in the same Enemy afresh upon us? King *David* tells us, That *the Lord gives Strength unto his People; the Lord gives his People the Blessing of Peace;* That is, God Almighty defends, and protects his People: but 'tis only so long as they are obedient to him; for he says in another place, *If a*

Man

Man will not turn, God will whet his Sword, and will bend his Bow and make it ready, and prepare for him the Inſtruments of Death. God Almighty has dealt all along with this Nation, as he formerly did with his own peculiar People, the *Jews:* He has exerciſed, and made Trial of us, by all the wiſe Arts of his Divine Providence; we have felt the Powers both of his Mercy, and his Juſtice, Alternately: Out of his *Mercy* he would never deſtroy us quite, yet it has, as it were, puzzl'd his *Juſtice* how to ſave us. We read of four ſorts of Judgments wherewith God formerly uſed to endeavour to reclaim the Antient *Jews*, *Plague*, *Fire*, *Sword* and *Famine*; we in this Nation have, in a few Years, felt the former *Three*; and, indeed, we have ſome Reaſon to fear, from the remarkable Defect and Decay of the Seaſons for ſome Years laſt paſt, that if we do not repent in time, and deprecate God's heavy Diſpleaſure againſt us, his Providence may be a preparing the *Fourth*, and the moſt dreadful of them all, a *Famine*, for us.

Let us therefore, with the greateſt Importunities, make our Addreſſes now to Almighty God, that he would be pleas'd to avert thoſe terrible Judgments which we ſo righteouſly have deſerv'd, and to which the great Sins of the Nation do now ſo juſtly expoſe us; humbly beſeeching him, not for us, but for his his own Name's ſake, and becauſe we are his People, and are called after his Name, and becauſe his holy Faith and Religion are profeſs'd among us, that he would be pleas'd to hear the Prayers and Supplications of his Servants, which they have made before him this Day. And, together with our ſelves, let us pray unto God, that he would pleaſe,

2. To

2. To regard our distressed Brethren in the Faith, all the World over; particularly, *to relieve and comfort those that suffer abroad for the Protestant Religion.* 'Tis a mighty Scandal to the Christian Religion, and what all *Jews*, *Turks* and *Pagans* may justly reproach the Followers of *Christ* with, that there are such implacable Divisions, and such barbarous Persecutions practis'd and kept up among us. The Doctrine of the great Author of our Faith was made up all of Love; this was the distinguishing Character his Disciples were to be known by, *If they lov'd one another:* Yet in a certain Church, and a Church too that boasts it self the only true Church of Christ, we find that Badge and Character quite worn off; for, instead of loving those who cannot perswade their Consciences to swallow such gross Absurdities as they do themselves, these Men think they *do God good Service if they kill them.* I might produce many Instances of this outragious Zeal, against the *Romish* Church; The cruel Inhumanities against the *Vaudois*, the Butcheries of the *Albigenses*, and the Poor of *Lyons*, the total Extirpation of the Protestants in *Moravia*, *Silesia*, *Bohemia* and *Hungary*, the Massacre of the *Huguenots* in *France*, and the *English* Protestants in *Ireland*; not to mention those Ignominious Flames that were kindl'd in our own Queen *Mary*'s Days, and that terrible and unparallell'd Design that was laid to destroy the *Lords and Commons* of our Nation at one Blow in the succeeding Reign, are all Memorable Examples of the Popish Cruelty. But we need not look back into History to furnish us with Instances of this kind; how many living Objects of our Compassion are still under great Pressures from them in the neigh-

bouring Countries to us! And how many Thouſands have fled from thence, to us, for Refuge? There, indeed, the *Vine* of the Lord does moſt apparently ſuffer; there *the Wild-Boar of the Wood does root it up, and the Wild-Beaſts of the Field devour it.* But let us, with King *David*, ſay, *Turn thee again, O Lord God of Hoſts; look down from Heaven, behold and viſit this Vine, and the place of the Vineyard which thy Right Hand hath planted, and the Branch that thou madeſt ſo ſtrong for thine own ſelf.*

3. The Third Duty of the Day is, *to implore a Bleſſing from Almighty God upon His Majeſty, and all his Dominions.* And here I think it altogether unneceſſary to uſe any Arguments to excite your Zeal, or to heighten your Affections; Intereſt, which is the firſt Spring and great Director of all our Actions, if not Gratitude, will recommend this Duty to us: The great Benefits and Advantages we have already receiv'd from him, are ſufficient Motives to pray for his long and happy Reign over us. He that has preſerv'd our Rights and Liberties, that has reſcu'd our Religion, that has maintain'd our Laws, that has defeated the Deſigns of our Enemies, that has ſubdu'd the Diſturbers of our Peace; he that has run all Hazards of his Life, often croſs'd the Seas, travers'd many Countries, ventur'd his Perſon in Battel, and ſometimes very narrowly ſav'd it; he that has oppoſed, and ſtemm'd too, the Tide of a Power generally thought irreſiſtible: In a Word, he that has ſettl'd us in Peace at home, and procur'd us Honour abroad; if he does not deſerve our hearty good Wiſhes, and moſt ſincere Prayers, I know not what Obligations can extort that Duty from us.

The

The Kingdom of *England* is now in as hopeful a Condition as any Nation can be, if we are not wanting in some Cases to our selves: If we can preserve our Peace with as much Prudence and Unanimity, as we carry'd on the War with Heartiness and Courage; if we keep our Country as quiet within our selves, as we defended it bravely against others; in a Word, if we live up to the Rules of our Religion, as well as we fought for it; then will *England*, in time, not only recover its Strength and Riches, flourish and grow great within it self, but it will be able to give Laws to all its Neighbours round about it: And, indeed, not to flatter our selves, there is no Kingdom I know of in the World so every way capable of being made Great and Glorious, as we are now at this time; and that upon these *Two* Accounts:

1. We have a King, whom God seems to have brought into the World, to have train'd up and preserv'd on purpose for us: A Man of our own Religion, and indeed, of a true *English* Temper and Genius; a Man skilful and courageous in War, wise and satisfy'd in Peace; a Man that reposes a great Trust in the Fidelity of his Subjects, and a Man in whom they may repose theirs; a Man so wholly dispos'd for the Good of his People, that he is always ready to hearken to their Counsels, and to comply with them; a Man, in short, altogether inclin'd, and every way qualify'd, both to serve, and to protect his People; a Man, to sum up all, of whom I would not be thought to speak too great a Thing, if I say he is as brave a Warrior as either *Alexander* or *Cæsar* was, because I design to speak yet a greater, and

that is, that he is as good a Christian as either *Constantine* or *Theodosius* was.

2. We have a People, famous in the World for great Valour and Courage, always having had a good Skill in Arms, and of such undaunted Spirits, that if we were united within our selves, we are able perhaps to grapple with the most potent Kingdoms near us. We are a happy Nation too in our Situation: When the Prophet *Ezekiel* tells us of the Happiness of *Canaan*, he describes it to be *a Land of Unwall'd Villages, where the People are at rest, and dwell safely; all of them dwelling without Walls, and having neither Bars nor Gates*: So we of this Nation have no need of Walling and Fortifying our Towns, as some of our Friends upon the Continent are forc'd to do; because, as the Prophet *Nahum* speaks of the City of *No*, we *have the Sea for a Rampart to us*. We are still happier by our Constitution and Government, which, by its excellent Laws and Administration, so effectually provides for the Security, Quiet and Comfort of the People, that of no Nation under Heaven may it be more properly said, that *every Man may sit under his own Vine, and under his Fig-tree, and no Man shall make him afraid*. And we are happiest of all in our Church; a Church, which for Purity of Doctrine, Decency of Worship, and all Advantages for Piety, may compare with, if not exceed, any Church upon the Face of the Earth.

Ezek. 38. 11.

Nah. 3. 8.

Mic. 4. 4.

These are the peculiar Advantages of *England*, and these are the Happinesses we at present enjoy; there is but one thing wanting to continue and secure these Blessings to us, and without that, all our Skill in Arms, all our Natural Courage, all our Plenty and Security,

Security, our wholsome Laws, and wise Constitution, will not be able to support and maintain us; and that is, True Godliness and Vertue. Let us all therefore pour out our most Affectionate Prayers unto God, to assist us with his Grace in the Attainment of these Accomplishments: And to his Grace, which he is never backward of affording us, let us add our own Endeavours; let us shew the good Effects of these our Days of Humiliation in all the other Days of our Life. What shall it profit us to depend upon our Mortification and Fasting, when God shall say, as he speaks by the Prophet *Zechary*, *Did you at all fast unto me, even unto me?* The proper Fruit of Fasting is, to forsake our Sins, and become better for the future; without this, all our Fasting will but fill us with Wind, all our Tears will be but as Water spilt upon the Ground; in a Word, all our Penances will but create us Pain here, and increase it hereafter.

But if we do now unfeignedly resolve to amend for the future, and shall prosecute those Resolutions in the Series of our Lives, we may then hope that God will *incline his Ear unto us, and hear*: In sure and certain Hopes of which, we now, according as we are appointed,

1. Pray, that God would bless, preserve and keep our present King, as the Instrument by which he himself has chose to work such wondrous Deliverances already for us: May never any Foreign Forces, or Intestine Conspiracies, prevail against him; May never any Jealousies be fomented between him and his People; May he always think himself secure in the Hands of his *English* Subjects, and may they know they are so in his. Together with himself, May God

God bleſs all his Dominions; May they grow in Strength, increaſe in Riches, and excel in Honour; May he keep ſtedfaſt the true Friends to the Government, and baffle the Hopes of thoſe that are not; May he *give Wiſdom to the Wiſe, and ſtop the Mouths of the Fooliſh.*

2. As the Conſideration of our own Welfare and Intereſt prompts us to wiſh our ſelves all the Good imaginable, ſo let our Compaſſion ſtir us up to pray for the Relief of our diſtreſſed Brethren the Proteſtants abroad: May God, in his due time, as he once did the Children of *Iſrael*, lead this his People through thoſe Red Seas of Blood, through thoſe Wilderneſſes of Pains and Troubles, if not into ſome *pleaſant Land* here upon Earth, yet to the *Heavenly Canaan* at laſt: May he give them Conſtancy in their Faith, and Patience under their Sufferings; and whatever Numbers he is pleas'd to ſuffer to be diminiſh'd from the *Communion of his Saints* here upon Earth, may he add to the *Noble Army of Martyrs* in Heaven.

Laſtly, Let us pray unto God, that he would look down upon this ſinful People of *England*, and that he would avert thoſe Judgments which, we muſt confeſs, might be our due Reward.

But inſtead of Judgments, God has heap'd Mercies upon us of late; he has firſt ſav'd us from the Slavery of our Conſciences, and indeed, of our Perſons; next, he has frequently deliver'd us from the Devices of Wicked Men, who have uſed ſeveral Ways and Means to ruin us; ſometimes by endeavouring to take off our King, ſometimes by corrupting our Coin, and by many other Ways, which Reſtleſs Spirits are fruitful enough at inventing. And now at laſt,

laſt, he has crown'd all his Mercies to us, in the Bleſſing of a Peace: *Thou haſt made Wars to ceaſe amongſt us; thou haſt broke the Bow, and cut the Spear in ſunder,* (as holy *David* ſpeaks.) *Nation ſhall not now lift Sword up againſt Nation; neither ſhall they learn War any more,* ſays the Prophet *Iſaiah* of the *Iſraelites,* when they repented, and turn'd unto God. May *We* alſo repent, and turn, that we may have the Benefit of this Prophecy too: May this our Peace prove firm and laſting, and may we never again be embroil'd in Wars and Blood. However, I heartily wiſh that the King may never want ſuch Subjects, of ſuch Skill and Courage, ſuch Loyalty and true Honeſty, to defend him, our Country, and our Church, upon any Occaſion, as his late *Engliſh* Army was. But then, I will crave Leave to add this one Prayer, to end all; and I believe every Soldier that was in the Army, I am ſure every true *Engliſh*-Man, that loves his Country, will join with me; and that is, How neceſſary ſoever an Army may be, in Times of Exigency, for the Defence of our King, our Country, and our Church, yet God grant that neither of them may ever again have Occaſion to make uſe of their Swords, or to try either their Skill, or their Courage.

FINIS.